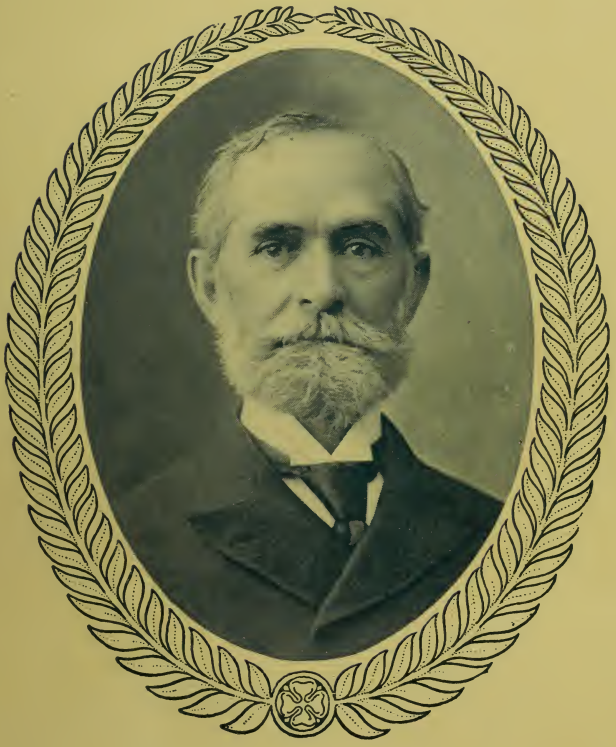
In Memoriam.



1833. DEACON LAURIN A. BUMPUS. 1902.

Memorial Sermon

IN HONOR OF

DEACON LAURIN A. BUMPUS

PREACHED IN THE

SECOND CHURCH, DORCHESTER, MASS.

July 13th, 1902

With a brief sketch of his life

By

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The Sermon

Companionship with Jesus, as illustrated in the life of DEACON LAURIN A. BUMPUS

Text.— Acts IV. and the last clause of the 13th verse— "and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

I FEEL sure that if we were to regard the wishes of our departed brother, we should refrain from speaking of him to-day. But if he were persuaded that the occasion could be used to help others and glorify God, permission would be given us to speak.

Yielding to the instinctive promptings of our hearts, we must speak. It will assist

us in our meditations, this morning, if we let our thoughts gather around this theme: Companionship with Jesus as illustrated in the life of Deacon L. A. Bumpus.

We find here the secret of this beautiful and fruitful life—Companionship with Jesus. It was the enemies of Jesus who took knowledge of Peter and John that they had been with Him. It has been true in this community, for years, that many who have had no personal interest in Jesus, or in the Christian faith, or in the Church of Jesus, have taken knowledge of Mr. Bumpus that he had been with Jesus. They may have refused to believe in the Bible, refused to believe in the Christian religion, or the creed of the church, but they have said to themselves, and said to others, "We do believe in Mr. Bumpus."

His life has been a living, unanswerable

argument in favor of Christianity, and it has put to silence the doubter and questioner. This good man won the hearts, and commanded the confidence, of those who have little or no sympathy with the church, or the things for which the church of Christ is supposed to stand. "He had a good report of them which are without." We shall be surprised at the volume of testimony that will reach our ears, in the days to come, from this class of men, and perhaps it will be the finest tribute that will be paid to his memory. Though half unconscious of it, it was with him a source of measureless power. His unconscious influence—who can ever estimate it? His companionship with Jesus so clarified his vision and so filled him with his Master's spirit that his life was characterized with rare singleness of aim and rare intensity of purpose.

The kingdom of God and his righteousness were always first in his thought and his activity. In his view, human life took on an almost tragic seriousness. Naturally of a playful temper, with a most genial and cheerful and even mirthful spirit, a lover of children, of nature, of music, of social life, thoroughly interested in men and affairs and current events, a most wholesome and companionable man, he was also at the furthest possible remove from anything like levity or flippancy or aimlessness, either in conversation or conduct. Of the holiday view of life he knew absolutely nothing. There was in his ransomed nature a tremendous undercurrent of seriousness and earnestness, tempered with sanity and good sense, the incessant push of which he always felt, and from which he did not seem to care to be released. It was hard

stopping him from doing a thing that he delighted to do. One lesson, and only one of great importance so far as I know, he never learned: namely, how to rest. Recreation, rest, had little or no place in his very complete catalogue of Christian virtues. He had a most exacting conscience, all of whose severities he visited upon himself. He was lenient toward others, severe with himself. Those two great imperatives, "Must" and "Ought" were his constant companions, not, however, as task masters scourging him to the performance of some inexorable and reluctant task; oh, no, but as gentle, firm coadjutors, compelling him with an urgency born of love, and thus making duty his delight.

So close and loving was his companionship with Jesus that he could not help saying: "Wist ye not that I must be about my

Father's business," "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is to-day: the night cometh when no man can work." "Excepting the corn or wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." And he received as distinct a ministry of the Lord Jesus as any man who was ever ordained to the so-called work of the ministry. "This one thing I do." "The love of Christ constraineth me." "Instant in season, out of season." "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Such inspired and inspiring words as these were ever whispering their urgent message into his listening ears, and became watchwords

of his strenuous life. His response to them was as joyful as the words were insistent. Their dynamic force and compelling power were love; love to God and love to man.

You will, perhaps, think the statement I now make extravagant, but I ask you to mark it and see if it is not within the bounds of truth. There is hardly a doctrine, or precept, or virtue, or grace, or activity, or attainment, mentioned in the Word of God, which did not find more or less full expression in the life of this servant of God. Whatever it forbade he eschewed. Whatever it commanded he aimed to do. "He adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

It was extremely difficult for me to find a text for this morning because there are so many that describe the man, and give the key to his saintly life. I should have been

glad to take all the Beatitudes. I thought of turning to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians—that great chapter on charity, or love. I have read within your hearing the twelfth chapter of Romans. I should have been glad to select the fifteenth chapter of John about the vine and the branches, and abiding in Christ, for in such selections as these we have his portrait, as we met him in the daily walks of life. Industry, courtesy, constancy, fidelity, sincerity, efficiency, and humility were salient traits in his character.

He carried out the first part of John Wesley's great motto for the church: "Always at it." Our sorrow is that we did not carry out the other part, "All at it."

He was always at it, and he did many different kinds of work with equal facility and equal success.

He was versatile, many sided, tactful, prompt and thorough. He was equally at home and had equal welcome with the poor, the laboring man, with the stranger, with the sick, with men of affairs, in the social circle, in his Bible class, in the prayer meeting, and in the business affairs of the church, as well as among his neighbors and his friends. Everybody was glad to see him. Obtrusive nowhere, he was welcome everywhere, and as far as my home was concerned, he never stopped long enough. "Just a moment," "just a moment," he used to say. All doors swung open to let him in; doors to the house and doors to the heart.

Not only the quality, but the amount of work done by him in many directions was remarkable, and much of it will be known only at the last day, for it was not seen by men.

Time will not allow me to dwell upon his work among the sick and poor. To many of us it was very well known. He was a veritable son of consolation. On the day after his death, when the body had reached the home, and the sad fact had become known among those whom he had befriended, poor women were seen walking before the door, not venturing to go to the door or ring the bell, but desiring to be as near to the man whom they had loved as possible. Now if all of those whom he has helped during the years, were to file before the door of his home, it would be a very long procession, and require a long time to pass. "This poor man cried," and the Lord heard him and answered him through Mr. Bumpus. That is the way that prayer was often answered.

He had not only a sympathetic heart, but

discriminating judgment, and, more than all, the rare gift of reticence. He knew how to hold his tongue. Into his willing ears for twenty years in this community were poured tales of heartache, sorrow, unhappiness, domestic trouble, poverty, wretchedness, and oftentimes, alas, sin and crime (and do you wonder his heart got tired?) for everybody trusted him and he never betrayed a confidence. He might have been an easy purveyor of much foolish scandal, gossip, talk, criticism, and have unfolded much of the darker side of life to you, to me, and to others. No, he could not. How many sad secrets have been locked up in his heart and buried with him we shall never know. As he walked along these sad ways of life, in his blessed ministry of comfort, he poured in the soothing, healing

balm wherever possible, and then kept silent and carried the matter to God.

We should find it extremely difficult to recall an unkind, or even a disparaging, word ever spoken of anybody by him. If obliged to mention a sad fact about anyone, we remember how his countenance took on a regretful mien and his voice modulated to a whisper, and he bit his lips, lest he should say too much. Ah! this control of his tongue—what a lesson for us! "Idle words." How few of those will confront him in the judgment day. "His speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt."

For more than thirteen years, our association and co-operation, in the nature of the case, have been of the closest. "We have taken sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." He was indeed my true yoke-fellow. Gen-

eral Howard told me the other day that after he had sufficiently recovered from the loss of his right arm so that he could leave his room and go down stairs, he suddenly made a misstep, instinctively threw out his arm to save himself, and it was not there! He fell. I shall find it sadly true, in the weeks to come, that the strong right arm, ever ready to help, is not here. He who was wont to respond so gladly will not longer come. Many times a week, ordinarily, we met. This is my testimony today. We were so at one in our conception of truth, of the needs of the church, of methods of work, that there has never been an instance of even the slightest disagreement between us, in all the years. Never in all those years, I believe I can say it, has he spoken a word to me, which either in tone or meaning, as recalled in the clearer

light that floods his vision to-day, he would wish to change or withdraw. I believe I can, likewise, say that, so far as my memory goes, substantially the same is true of my words to him; and I bless God for that. It is a great pleasure for me to be able thus to speak.

There is another thing which I do not recall with so much pleasure to myself, though it shows the loveliness of his character. For thirteen years or more, he has stood, persistently and by thoughtful anticipation, between me and many, many, many a task and service which he feared might be too heavy for me, and has insisted upon taking the load himself. "Let me do it. Let me do it." "I am so sorry you have to go." Hardly a week passed that he did not express his regret that I had this or that or the other thing to do,

whereas I clearly see now that I ought to have shielded him and have helped him carry more of the load, for I was, after all, much stronger than he.

But that was the man, and it suggests the one shining, dominating, controlling characteristic of his life—self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, self-effacement, free, full, unstinted expenditure of himself for others, pouring out of soul, and all for Christ's sake.

I have seldom met a man who used the first personal pronoun so sparingly. Even in speaking of his religious experience, which he often did in our prayer meeting, he never put much emphasis there, dwelt little upon the "I," but magnified the grace of God which wrought in him. That was the man, servant of all.

His dearest friends could not hold him

back. The alabaster box of precious ointment he must break. He felt he must. The love of Christ constrained him, and the Master's service was his highest joy. In the course of these many years of self-sacrificing, self-effacing service, he developed a spiritual instinct, so to say, that became to him an almost infallible guide in his difficult, delicate and daily task, so that he was almost invariably at the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. His Christian experience, the accumulation of years, was a great, deep well, a kind of spiritual reservoir, always full, from which he could draw at sight according to the conditions that he might happen to meet. Oh! how reluctant he was to be ministered unto, and how he delighted to minister unto others! How much he was to you and to me, to this church, to the community, to

the city, to the world, we shall gradually learn by his absence.

It was my cherished hope, certainly, that his service would continue here at least as long as mine.

Now the question arises, How came we to have such a man? Where did he come from? How did he get his equipment? How did he become possessed of so many of these rare traits and beauties of character? How did it come to pass that he went so gladly on these errands of love? How was he able to move with so much acceptance among all kinds of people, and always leave the impression upon them of absolute genuineness? Was it by chance? Did he reach these spiritual heights by a sudden bound? Did he drop down from the skies? Did he get his training from the university and the school? No. We know

something of his history, of his early training, of the early dedication of his life to God. I can see clearly how in that Christian home (and the latest testimony that he ever gave in the prayer meeting was concerning the value of that home training), and during those years in business and as a mechanic, and during those later years in connection with the work of Dr. Cullis, where he lived and moved in an atmosphere of faith, of prayer and of sympathy, congenial to very few men; I can see how in all these schools he was preparing himself for the great and beneficent work of the last twenty years.

The great side of his life was his affluent religious nature, his spiritual life. He was pre-eminently a man of God. He is a fine illustration of what it means to be in the world and not of it. "To be carnally

minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Few men illustrated more distinctly the meaning of these significant words of the apostle Paul.

This spiritual side of his life is familiar to us all, and I want to call your attention to the fact that a man may be spiritually-minded in the best sense of that word, and yet be right down here, engaged in the every day, commonplace work of life, such as setting the hands of that clock, arranging the chairs in the chapel, inspecting the furnaces, caring for the grounds of the church, attending to any necessary work connected with

the church and society, just as truly and acceptably as when he is engaged in reading the Bible, or in prayer or in worship.

It does not mean that one shall withdraw from the world, refuse to read the newspapers, and be without interest in business and public affairs. Our friend was just as spiritually-minded and conscientious in attending the caucus as the prayer meeting. He knew the value of the still hour. He knew where to find the "hidings of God's power."

No small part of the equipment which made him strong to do and strong to bear and strong to suffer came to him in the closet when alone with God. It ought, in justice to his conception of the character and work of Christ, to be said that he rested all his hope of salvation in the merits of the Saviour whom he adored and

loved and not in anything he himself had ever done.

But these words of loving testimony must not be prolonged.

A monument of bronze or marble may, or may not, be erected to his memory. If it is, it must yield, at length, to the effacing touch of time.

His best and most enduring monument is in human hearts and lives. He has built himself into your life and mine and that of thousands who loved him. He will be remembered by what he has done—the sweetest remembrance possible. Every child in our Sunday school, every one who worshiped here, every one who attended the prayer meeting, every member of his Bible class, every man, woman and child, in all this populous community, who received recognition, cheer and help from

him, will remember him. Kind words, kind deeds are immortal. They never die. A living epistle written on our hearts, he will not be forgotten.

How familiar we have been, in times of need, with such expressions as these:—"Send for Mr. Bumpus." "Tell Mr. Bumpus." "Ask Mr. Bumpus to come or go, to do this or that."

More than ever now, his name is destined to become a household word. With tenderness and affection it will always be spoken. His last hour of service in this church was at the communion table. His last act of service after that hallowed hour, outside his home, though wearied and filled with pain, was, as might have been expected, a call upon one of the "shut-ins"—one whose health, for many years, has allowed her but seldom to go to the house of God. What

a characteristic ending of the sacred day! Wearied and worn by unceasing toil, he said to us, as we parted, "I am going away for a few days' rest." But how little either he or we realized the import of those words! He went, and it came to pass that he was going towards a rest more sweet, more blessed, more beautiful and more permanent than he had anticipated; for, without pain, as we must believe, he entered into the rest which remaineth for the people of God in a better world.

How can we best honor his memory? Not by fulsome eulogy, not by tears and sorrow and regret, but by cheerfully taking up, with strong, courageous purpose and glad hearts, the lines of work which have now fallen from his hands.

Henceforth, you and I ought to be better men and women than we ever have been,

and I believe we shall be. Deeper, richer meanings of life will be revealed to us, through his transparent life. We shall see more of the possibilities and joy of Christian service.

In our better moods, the "daily round," the "common task," will become glorified to us. And, perhaps, we shall ask ourselves not how little, but how much, for God and our fellow men.

It is said of Samson, who gloried in physical prowess, that he slew more in his death than during his life.

I cannot help hoping that this beloved man of God will win more souls and help more men and women in this church and community to purer lives and nobler forms of service by his death, than while he lived and worked among us. For he will still speak and by example live.

May his mantle fall upon us!

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

"As in the heavens the urns divine
Of golden light forever shine;
Tho' clouds may darken, storms may rage,
They still shine on from age to age:

So through the ocean tide of years
The memory of the just appears:
So thro' the tempest and the gloom
The good man's virtues light the tomb."

"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy."

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF

DEACON LAURIN A. BUMPUS

Laurin A. Bumpus was born in Hebron, Me., April 29, 1833, and completed his education at the Hebron Academy, an institution which has for many years stood in the front rank of institutions of its kind. His father was Deacon Alden Bumpus, and the family came of the best old New England stock, the founders in this country coming to Plymouth a year after the landing of the Mayflower. His boyhood was passed at the old homestead, but in early life he became a merchant and manufacturer in Buckfield, Me. Here he was married in 1859, to Abbie A. Eaton, of that town. He came to Boston in 1868 to take charge of the work of Dr. Cullis at Willard street, out of which grew the Consumptives' Home at Beacon Hill place, the Consumptives' Home at Grove Hall, Dorchester, and many other benevolent enterprises. He came to Dor-

chester when the consumptives' home here was established and had since lived here. He was intimately connected with Dr. Cullis from 1868 to 1879, and as the latter's chief adviser and most trusted assistant, with power of attorney and many other responsible trusts. He was Dr. Cullis' most trusted friend until the latter's death.

From 1879 to 1881 Mr. Bumpus was assistant pastor of the Shawmut Avenue Baptist church while Rev. Dr. Crane was pastor. In 1881 he received an appointment from the Boston City Missionary society under the general direction of Rev. D. W. Waldron, having Dorchester as his field of labor. For the past 21 years he had been intimately associated with the work of the Second church as treasurer and deacon and had also co-operated with the Dorchester Relief Society and the Associated Charities. He instituted and conducted neighborhood and cottage prayer meetings, almost without number, and there is no nook in Dorchester where his presence has not at one time or another come as a benediction.

He commanded the confidence and respect of all who knew him, and his life and character will be revered by a large circle of remembering friends.

He died Tuesday night, July 8th, 1902, at the home of his son, Hermon C. Bumpus at New Rochelle, N. Y., where he had gone for a few days' rest. The funeral services occurred at his own home 114 Melville Avenue, on the following Friday, attended by a large concourse of friends.

RESOLUTIONS ON MR. BUMPUS' DEATH

At a meeting of the Second church, held July 18, the following minute was unanimously passed and ordered spread upon the church records, and a copy sent to Mr. Bumpus' family:

This church desires to put upon record its sense of deep personal loss in the death of Deacon Laurin A. Bumpus, that we shall no more on earth grasp his hand, see his smile, hear his words of wisdom, nor feel the inspiration of his presence.

We cannot measure our loss in the work of the church. He was a faithful, able and consecrated officer, a devout student of the Word—wise and loving in exposition in the Sabbath school and prayer meeting—an assistant to the pastor in his visits to the sick, benefactions to the poor, as the bearer of Christ's message of rest for the weary, comfort for the sorrowing, joy for the penitent, hope for the wayward—in fact he was an inspiration to us in every effort for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom among us.

We recognize the goodness of God in the gift of such a man, and trust the lessons of his life will abide with us and yield rich fruitage.

J. J. Arakelyan, Printer, Boston.